THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

VOL. I. JUNE, 1905. No. 6.

WHEN FOUND——

THE ninth of this month will be the thirty-fifth anniversary of the death of Dickens, and in our present number will be found much to remind readers of the fact, if that were necessary. His death came as a national calamity to the whole of the English-speaking race, and inspired hundreds of articles of eulogy in the newspapers and magazines. Looking through some of these to-day, it is astonishing how faithfully they reflect the current estimate of the great man's genius. There is scarcely an instance where the flight of time would have made it necessary to temper the expressed opinion or view with any qualification. Dickens's books were appreciated and admired at he time of his death for the very reasons that they are admired and appreciated to-day, and will continue to be. There have been several plebiscites taken by librarians and others recently as to who is the most popular writer to-day. As will be seen on another page, Dickens is still the favourite.

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From the huge mass of articles we reprint the one from the *Spectator* of June 11th, 1870. The writer's statement that Dickens was the greatest humorist which England ever produced, not excepting even Shakespeare himself, created no little astonishment at the time, and was challenged in more than one contemporary journal. It brought forth a letter from J. Hain Friswell, which we also reprint. Mr. Friswell was so proud of his letter that he printed it at the end of an article on Dickens, which formed one of a series in a book called *Modern Men of Letters Honestly Criticised*, together with an extract from an American paper, which was in execrable taste. The book had a short life, as Sala brought an action for libel against its author, and it was suppressed.

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In connection with the celebration of the diamond jubilee of the Ragged School Union, held last month, it is interesting to note that it was at the instigation of Baroness Burdett-Coutts that Charles Dickens made inquiries into the working of the first ragged schools, nearly sixty-two years ago. In a letter to the late S. R. Starey, one of the founders, he suggested certain principles, which may be taken as those on which the Society was founded. Briefly they were sympathy with the children of the slums, godliness on broad elemental lines, and cleanliness in the widest sense. The Baroness, who happily is still with us, has continued her active interest in the Society all through.

Readers, by the way, will remember that it was to the Baroness (then Miss) Burdett-Coutts that Dickens dedicated *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which was appearing in parts at the time.

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The picture forming the frontispiece to the present issue is from a drawing by W. Boucher, which appeared in *Judy* on June 22nd, 1870. It is undoubtedly one of the best of the scores of similar memorial pictures which filled the papers at the time. The illustration appearing on page 147 is one of those memorial portraits then fashionable. On page 157 is a reproduction, from a photograph, of the room in the châlet in which Dickens did his writing. It was taken by Edward Banes, two days after Dickens's death, by request of the family. The original is now in the possession of the Forest Gate branch of the Fellowship, and was presented to it by Major G. E. Banes, M.P., on becoming a Vice-President of the branch. While a boy at Chatham and Rochester, Major Banes knew Dickens and many of his companions, and the photo is one of many mementos which he possesses of "the great master," as he calls him.

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There seems to be an impression among some members of the Fellowship that *The Dickensian* has superseded *Household Words* as the official organ of the Society, and several members have written to Mr. Ley asking how they are to obtain information as to summer outings, etc., and complaining that no notice of such functions has appeared in *The Dickensian*. In view of this evident misunderstanding, it may be well to point out that *Household Words* is still the weekly organ of the Fellowship, and that if members desire to keep in touch with the Society's doings, it is essential that they shall subscribe to that paper. For instance, on June 3rd there is an outing to Hampstead, and even if *The Dickensian* appeared on June 1st, this would be too short a notice. A weekly organ is indispensable, and it cannot be too strongly urged upon members that it is desirable that they should regularly subscribe to *Household Words*.

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Last month we recorded the fact that the manuscript of *The Battle of Life* had been purchased by Mr. Pierpont Morgan. Now information comes from New York that the manuscript of *Sketches of Young Gentlemen* has been sold in that city for £1,060, the purchaser being Mr. George D. Smith.

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Our cover design this month is that of *Dombey and Son*, used on the covers of the original issue in monthly parts. It is one of "Phiz's" most delightful pieces of work in this direction in every way. It is so full of humour, character, and whimsicality as to be well worth pondering over and studying.

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Owing to pressure on our space we are compelled to hold over two interesting letters on Mr. Harper's article on "The Blue Dragon." We hope to publish them next month. THE EDITOR.

THE INFLUENCE OF DICKENS ON SOCIETY*

THE greatest humourist whom England ever produced—Shakespeare himself certainly not excepted—is gone; and though we have no intention here of making one of those hasty estimates of his great achievements which journalists too often compose in haste to repent at leisure, it seems the fittest of all moments to draw attention to one of the least calculable of all effects of a great humourist's career, the wonderful influence his writings have exerted in softening the strong lines of demarcation between the different classes of English society, and the extraordinary stimulus they have thereby given to the various great efforts of the day for ameliorating wretchedness and reclaiming crime. That humour which so delighted in the grotesque as almost to make oddity a condition of the humourist's favour, should tend so powerfully as Mr. Dickens's humour has tended to soften the worst moral grotesquerie of society, is certainly curious enough. But so it unquestionably is. We may trace to *Oliver Twist* not only the first great wave of interest in the dangerous classes,—for the wonderful descriptions of Charley Bates, the Dodger, and the other young thieves whom the funny old gentleman educated in the art of picking pockets, undoubtedly produced the first movement for reformatory schools,—but also the first great attempt on the part of the public to discriminate between the wholesome severity of the Whig poor law and the vulgar selfishness of parochial cruelty. The gentleman in the white waistcoat who wanted to apprentice Oliver to the cruel sweep may be said to have been an incarnate protest by Mr. Dickens against that vulgar and fatal misinterpretation of the Whig policy which has since caused so dangerous a reaction against it; and Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney to have been his literary warnings against that selfish and wicked neglect of our workhouses, and especially the workhouse hospitals, which was two years ago revealed, to the horror and disgust of the public, in the reports of the *Lancet* and other papers. So, too, his Dotheboys Hall, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, and especially his terrible picture of Smike, the lad starved and beaten into partial idiocy, gave the first great impulse to that indignant love for the young, and the pity for their helplessness, which in later times has almost passed into a worship of children. And yet Mr. Dickens has not only never been a professional philanthropist, but he has exerted his great powers to the utmost to ridicule professional philanthropy. In his very last work, which is, we deeply regret to learn, like Mr. Thackeray's last work, a mere fragment, though one in which his great powers seem to have caught some of the glow and freshness of his youth, the sketch of Mr. Honeythunder, the professional advocate for universal brotherhood, promised to turn out one of his greatest satirical pictures. Nobody can forget the ridicule he poured on Mrs. Jellyby and her flannel petticoats for the African missions, or the bitter severity with which he criticized the cut-and-dried certificated schoolmaster (Bradley Headstone) in *Our Mutual Friend*. All he has done to soften the sharp

* "Charles Dickens," reprinted from the *Spectator*, June 11th, 1870.

distinctions between class and class has been done without any weakness at all for the technical agencies which, no doubt, in some greater or less degree, have been instrumental in accomplishing it. It was the great triumph of his humour to sharpen the vision of mankind for hideous moral contrasts which he knew as little as any of us how to remove; and for the systematic methods of attacking which he had even less taste than most other men,—his genius, like most other geniuses, revolting against system, and the conventional types it tends to produce.

Nor was it chiefly, we apprehend, even by direct pictures of poverty, misery, and crime that Mr. Dickens effected so much in the way of alleviating the harsh contrasts of English society. Humour,—in his case certainly, and we believe it has almost always been so,—is a great solvent of all exclusiveness and intolerance, a great enemy to social, to intellectual, to moral, to religious bigotry—so great that it sometimes tends even to obliterate the distinctions between good and evil altogether. How is it possible to think of hypocrisy without a laugh when we recall the image of Mr. Pecksniff, and how is it possible heartily to hate that which gives us so inexhaustible a fund of amusement? How is it possible not to be tickled by a man who speaks of his daughters' names with so much piety?—"'Charity and Mercy, Mercy and Charity,' said Mr. Pecksniff, 'not unholy names, I hope. Charity, my dear, when you give me my bed-candlestick to-night, remind me to pray for Mr. Jonas Chuzzlewit, who has done me an injury.'" And how can one see the same traits in real life, even in that confused and far more imperfect form in which we find them in real life,—not illuminated and separated from all the alloy of commonplace fact by Mr. Dickens's genius,—without a touch of the genial feeling which they excited in us in the pages of the great humourist? After making acquaintance with Charley Bates and the Dodger, the present writer, then a boy, distinctly remembers that his horror of theft experienced a vast diminution, nor was it without admiring sympathy of the purest kind that he read the account of the Dodger's imperturbable coolness in the dock, where he reserves his defence on the ground that his attorney is breakfasting "with the Wice-President of the House of Commons." The only vices the popular horror of which Mr. Dickens does not to some extent diminish by his humour, are those in which he finds no humourous aspect, such as the cruelty of Squeers. Yet even Quilp, who is pure cruelty, and Sally Brass, who, towards her poor little starved servant, at least, is cruelty personified in a very horrible form, are so painted that we cannot altogether avoid the impression that their cruelty is a grotesque caprice of nature, horrible in itself, but hardly more detestable than the freaks of a cat with a captive mouse. And, no doubt, to some degree this effect of humour in diminishing the horror we feel for the actual victims of vice and sin is perfectly just. The difference between our disgust for our own sins and the far greater disgust we feel for sins of which we know nothing, is almost all ignorance, and the humourist who makes us see that the latter are as natural to those who indulge in them as ours are to us, teaches us nothing but the truth.

At the same time, it cannot be denied, we think, that if all the world

were thoroughly imbued with Mr. Dickens's morality, the result must be not merely this perfectly just modification of feeling towards all types of evil of which little or nothing is familiarly known, but a tendency also to a specific preference for some failings over others, which is due to the particular type of Mr. Dickens's own character. Undoubtedly

Mr. Dickens looked with a more than approving eye on all the aspects of jollity, even though accompanied, as they so often are, with self-indulgent weaknesses; and with a detestation perfectly morbid on those meaner and harsher elements in human nature which are fatal to jollity. Mr. Wardle, and Bob Sawyer, and Ben Allen, and John Brodie, and Mr. Richard Swiveller, and Messrs. Weller, senior and junior, and Mr. Pickwick himself, and a host of other favourites of the

novelist's are admirable chiefly for their powers of enjoying drink and meat and stolen kisses and general hilarity. Nobody will enter into Dickens completely without losing something of religious and moral intensity, and catching something of suspicion of all the austerer types of character. His pictures of the Shepherd, of Mr. Chadband, of Mr. Honeythunder, and Mr. Murdstone, are balanced by no pictures of an opposite tendency, and it can hardly be denied that the great humourist's private creed was very much contained in the precept to be genial with all men except such as are ungenial themselves, who may very likely be hypocrites, and if they are not, are almost worse in their stony-heartedness than if they were. He was far too fond, also, of pushing his doctrine of geniality to the point of sentimental falseness, and even in his latest picture of the Minor Canon who so laboriously pretends to need spectacles in order to pay an implicit compliment to his aged mother's sharp sight, he has shown us that his own moral ideal was not quite simple and natural on the sentimental side of his nature.

Still, the deficiencies, such as they were, in Mr. Dickens's literary morality have really done far less to relax the moral ideal of society unduly, than his marvellous powers as a humourist have done to teach us how unduly stringent it has often been through mere ignorance. He has taught us by his humour, as nothing else could have taught us, how full to overflowing what is called "vulgar" life is of all the human qualities, good and evil, which make up the interest of human existence. His delight in the grotesque has done far more than ever Mr. John Stuart Mill by any philosophical defence of liberty could do, to make us tolerant towards individual eccentricity of almost every shade, and even to teach us to pet it with something like parental fondness. And he has given a greater impulse than any man of his generation to that righteous hatred of caste-feeling and class-cruelty which more and more distinguishes modern society, though he did not quite rise perhaps to that "enthusiasm of humanity" which some regard as the essence of Christianity itself.

SHAKESPEARE AND DICKENS*

(*To the Editor of the "Spectator"*)

SIR,—In your admirable "Topics of the Day," in which there is always so much to agree with, I find a note (June 11) which astounds me. In the greatest gift of genius—humour—you place Dickens beyond Shakespeare. "He is the only English writer of whom it can be truly said that in any one line in which Shakespeare *was not only great, but at his greatest*, this other was greater than he. But as a humourist we think this is true of Dickens." You then cite Mrs. Gamp and Juliet's nurse as parallels; they seem to me quite distinct; one is a mere hireling by the job, the other an adherent of the family, a woman of some position, a duenna of an humble sort. But take Mrs. Quickly, Gossip Quickly, and Mrs. Gamp, and then say which is the greater, broader, more natural character? Or, take Sam Weller, and compare him with Shakespeare's greatest, Sir John Falstaff? Why in fifty years the fun of the one may be past and forgotten, a sealed language, an *argot* which only contemporaries could understand; while certainly Falstaff will be as alive in fifty centuries as he is now. Shakespeare works *ab intra*,

* Reprinted from the *Spectator*, June 18th, 1870.

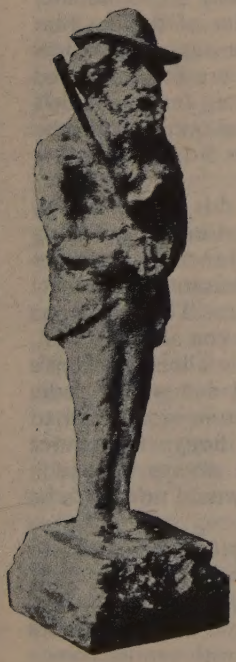
and paints human nature ; Dickens *ab extra*, and gives us particulars and classes. Has Dickens any one character to compare in *truth*, not with Falstaff, but with either Nym, Pistol, Pompey in *Measure for Measure*, Maria, Sir Toby Belch,—not to fly at more subtle characters and higher game, Touchstone and the Fools in *Lear* and *Twelfth Night?* And with all reverence for the great author just dead, whom I knew both in books and in the flesh, has he drawn any characters at all superior, or even equal, to Partridge, Parson Adams, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim,—not to go abroad, and call up Sancho Panza?

Comparisons are perhaps at this time more odious than even in the proverb, but Dickens when alive complained that he had been spoiled by his critics ; and his worst enemy, if he had any, could not injure him more than a false elevation.

I am, sir, etc.,

J. HAIN FRISWELL.

[Mr. Friswell does not understand our criticism. We do not believe, as we have elsewhere maintained, that Dickens ever drew a *real* character. Mrs. Gamp is—in a very true sense—though it sounds paradoxical, but we have explained our meaning elsewhere, his highest idealism. Shakespeare hardly ever created a character that was not real in its whole basis. But *as a feat of humour*, we do seriously hold that Mrs. Gamp stands above Shakespeare's greatest efforts in the same direction,—even, and no doubt that is an enormous 'even,'—even Sir John Falstaff. Whether or not Mrs. Gamp may be unintelligible to posterity seems to us entirely irrelevant. *We* can understand her, and can also understand Shakespeare's highest feats of humour, and are therefore perfectly competent to compare the relative successes of the two.—Ed. *Spectator.*]



MR. PERCY FITZGERALD'S STATUETTE OF DICKENS

AMONGST Mr. Fitzgerald's many accomplishments is that of a sculptor, and in his London house are to be seen many busts and figures, executed by himself, of his old friends of days gone by, such as Carlyle, Thackeray, Forster, and others. Of Dickens, his favourite, he has done several, one of which is at Rochester, and another at Bath. By his courtesy we are able to give a picture of his statuette representing "Boz" in his habit as he walked at Gadshill. The costume was his favourite one, highly countrified. His friends will recognise the peculiar roguish or "knowing" fashion in which his hat was set on ; also the energetic way of carrying his stick. It is this manner, in which he went for his country walks, that Mr. Fitzgerald has aimed at reproducing.

The statuette is destined for one of the Dickens towns.

DICKENSIAN HUMBUGS

By WOODFORD SOWRAY

II. IN PARTICULAR

HAVING viewed, in a previous article, our subject in general, let us now take it from another point of view—not shifting the camera, but merely adjusting the focus—and glance at some of the individual characters in the Dickensian gallery of humbugs and shams. First of all, you will at once recall to the mind's eye the "prim-faced, red-nosed man with a long, thin countenance, and a semi-rattlesnake sort of eye, wearing very short trousers and black cotton stockings, like the rest of his clothing, particularly rusty." You will observe that in every case Dickens gives us a detailed and suggestive portrait. Behold Mr. Stiggins! whom we first meet seated in a high-backed chair by a brightly blazing fire in the bar-parlour of the "Marquis of Granby," engaged in the pleasing domestic occupation of making toast, and refreshing himself from a glass of reeking hot pineapple rum and water. The elder Weller arrives and gives Sam a further view of the deputy-shepherd's powers—"Good hand at accounts—borrows eighteenpence on Monday, and comes on Tuesday for a shilling to make it up half a crown; calls again on Vensday for another half a crown to make it five shillings; and goes on doubling till he gets it up to a five-pound note in no time, like them sums in the 'rithmetic book 'bout the nails in the horse's shoes, Sammy." Mr. Stiggins leaves the inn finally that night with several most indubitable symptoms of having quite as much pine-apple rum and water about him as he can comfortably accommodate, leaving the two Wellers discussing the practicability of driving him away; and you will remember Sam's views on the question—"If I was the properiator of the 'Markis o' Granby,' and that 'ere Stiggins came and made toast in *my* bar, I'd pison his rum and water, but I wouldn't be too hard on him at first. I'd drop him in the water-butt and put the lid on, and if I found he was insensible to kindness I'd try the other persvasion."

Later in the story Dickens further delineates this rum-drinking, religious humbug in the well-known scene of the tea-drinking gathering of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, held in a large room pleasantly and airily situated at the top of a safe and commodious ladder. The humorous account of this meeting and the committee's report you all know well, and I need not particularise them in detail. It is all in Dickens's inimitable style, though the humour is broad and somewhat crude. Such a satire on religious and temperance imposture would fail to convince in these days, and we must admit that, though impostures still flourish and find their dupes, and I suppose always will, such vulgar and impudent impostors as Brother Stiggins would nowadays be impossible.

However, when we read and laugh over these chapters of *Pickwick* to which I have referred, as well as those later ones describing Stiggins's visit to the Fleet Prison, when he partook of that "go o' wanity warm," and his last visit to the "Markis o' Granby" in search of a little more of the same liquor, whence he is violently expelled with sundry power-

ful kicks by the indignant old Weller, when, I say, we read these again and again, as many of us do, and laugh and ponder over them, we are reminded that as regards the drinking propensities of this character we have much improved. That ministers of religion occasionally give way to the drink temptation, and disgrace their cloth, we know well. But such cases are few, and the end is inevitable. Public opinion has greatly changed in this matter, our social habits and customs have altered, and a minister of religion who tipples is practically impossible. Dickens has been bitterly attacked for his delineation of Stiggins, and accused of ridiculing religion, but these charges are completely refuted in certain passages of his Preface to the *Pickwick Papers*, which I have not space to quote here. It may be observed that the name of Stiggins is still applied, not always suitably, to those who seek to regulate public amusements, or promote temperance legislation.

Mr. Chadband is another type of the religious humbug. He is depicted as a fat, unctuous, oily, self-satisfied pretender, dealing in ludicrously inapt similes, and pouring forth dull platitudes with the smug pharisaism of his tribe. Just as *rum* is the touchword in describing Brother Stiggins, so in depicting the Rev. Mr. Chadband, the characterising idea is—*oil*. He is a "large yellow man with a fat smile and a general appearance of having a good deal of train oil in his system." He describes himself as a vessel, and is rather a consuming vessel, the persecutors say a *gorging* vessel. When he visits Mrs. Snagsby's domicile for tea, and the inevitable discourse, "excellent provision is made of dainty new bread, crusty twists, cool fresh butter, thin slices of ham, tongue, and German sausage, and delicate little rows of anchovies nestling in parsley; not to mention new-laid eggs, to be brought up warm in a napkin, and hot buttered toast. . . ." Mr. Chadband, after the usual windbag moralisings of his tribe, "sits down and lays about him prodigiously. The conversion of nutriment of any sort into *oil* of the quality already mentioned appears to be a process so inseparable from the constitution of this exemplary vessel that in eating and drinking he may be said to become a kind of considerable *oil mills*. On this evening in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, he does such a powerful stroke of business that the warehouse appears to be quite full when the works cease." Dickens's love for whimsical similes is so aptly used for this character, and referred to ever and anon, that we can never dissociate Chadband from oily hypocrisy.

But there is another difference in the delineation of these two religious (or in reality irreligious) humbugs. Stiggins is not wordy, nor given to long exhortation; he is almost a sententious humbug. Chadband (when well oiled) goes like an eight-day clock, and with similar monotonous repetition. As a witty Irish writer once said of a cabinet minister now gone from us, "He is smoothly flowing in speech as the sand in the hour-glass is flowing; finely sounding, as a big drum is sounding; but generally as dry as the sand and as hollow as the drum."

Read the samples of his filling up of words delivered at Mrs. Snagsby's tea-parties in Cook's Court. You may hear the same sort of thing—with slight variations in style and subject—in many places of worship to this day. It is one of the reasons why in more intelligent communities they are gradually becoming more empty. It is called "preaching."

"My friends," says the oily one, "peace be on this house! On the master thereof, on the mistress thereof, on the young maidens, and on the young men! My friends, why do I wish for peace? What is peace? Is it war? No. Is it strife? No." And so on. This favourite device of windbags of asking questions on insignificant points with self-evident answers, is in some circles vastly admired, but to the thinking majority it is surely either vexatious and irritating, or a direct incentive to slumber.

With this we will leave the humbugs who use sacred things and religious sentiments for their own sordid ends. Of the Rev. Luke Honeythunder, in *Edwin Drood*, I will here say little. He is a platform orator of the blatant, blustering, bombastic sort, noisy and pretentious; the type who want to make us all good by force, and drag us into sweetness and light by the scruff of the neck; the type who, as Dickens puts it, seem to be perpetually saying: "Curse your souls and bodies, come and be blessed!" These are not exactly humbugs, but mistaken enthusiasts.

We now come, though for a brief glance, to the social humbugs.

Let us in fancy take a run down the South Western line (or should I say by coach?) to the old cathedral city of Salisbury, and pay a visit to the famous Mr. Pecksniff, seated by the fireside with those artless daughters, Charity and Mercy. Pecksniff is, perhaps, more familiar in our mouths—a household word—than any other humbug in the Dickensian gallery. He does not ape religion, but is prone to glib, unctuous moralising, and to posing as a meek, much injured martyr of benevolent intentions and unselfish aims, whenever his real aims are laid bare. He purrs like a cat hoping for titbits when his schemes prosper; he is bland, benign, effusive to Martin Chuzzlewit, who, as a pupil, is profitable to him, until Martin finds that he is an impostor as an architect, and can teach him nothing. He is patronising and fatherly to poor Tom Pinch till he finds the latter, simple and honest, stands in his way; and then, again like the cat, he shows his claws, and turns Tom out of the house with subtle vindictiveness, but with an outward air of injured innocence and paternal forgiveness, holding forth on Tom's base ingratitude and deceit. There are many honest Tom Pinches, but still more wily Pecksniffs in the world.

But though, as the book says, "a moral man, a grave man, a man of noble sentiments and speech," there is no pretence about Mr. Pecksniff when his pocket is in question. You remember the incident of Chevy Slyme and Montague Tigg, both hard up, trying to negotiate a small loan from the astute moralist. "Perhaps you would rather *not* lend Slyme five shillings," says Tigg. "I would *much* rather not," rejoins Pecksniff. "Egad!" cries Tigg, as though it had just occurred to him, "it's very possible you may be right. Would you entertain the same sort of objection to lending *me* five shillings now?" "Yes, I couldn't do it, indeed," said Pecksniff. "Not even half a crown, perhaps," says Tigg. "Not even half a crown." "Why then we come," says Mr. Tigg, "to the ridiculously small sum of eighteenpence, ha! ha!" "And that," said Mr. Pecksniff, "would be equally objectionable."

There never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff; he is a most exemplary man, fuller of virtuous precepts than a copy-book. "His

very throat was moral." You saw a good deal of it, and it seemed to say, "There is no deception about me, ladies and gentlemen; a holy calm pervades me." His person was sleek, his manner soft and oily. Everything about him, to his plain black suit and dangling double eye-glass, cried aloud, "Behold the moral Mr. Pecksniff!" We get at once an excellent insight into his character in the opening scene after Charity and Mercy have comforted his bruises with applications of pickled brown paper, to what Charity calls the *knobby parts* of her parent's anatomy. I refer to the sham benignity and "forgiveness of wrong," displayed in the parting with John Westlock.

This snivelling assumption of a magnanimous forgiving spirit, and of meek, saintly endurance of injustice, is over and over again depicted, *e.g.* when old Chuzzlewit at first treats him with scorn and suspicion, and the unctuous hypocrite suggests that "it arises from a cold in the head, or is attributable to snuff, or smelling-salts, or onions, or anything but the real cause." The same mock assumption of wounded dignity appears when he turns young Martin out of his house in order to worm himself into the old man's favour, and when, later, he expels poor Tom Pinch because *he* at last has seen him in his true colours. His attempt to ingratiate himself with Mary Graham is still more repellent. Moreover, like all his tribe, he is virtuously indignant at seeing in others the very failings conspicuous in himself, though more excusable. *He* makes his living by dubious means, by artifice and pretence; *he* gets pupils with much profit to himself, and even takes to himself the credit of young Martin's plans of the grammar school. But listen to the sainted man's denunciation of Mrs. Todgers, the boarding-house-keeper, whom he forces to admit having worn a double face (as he calls it) to please her lodgers. She pleads that she must preserve peace among them, and keep her connection together, and the profit is very small. "The profit!" cries the arch-humbug. "The profit of dissimulation! To worship the golden Calf of Baal for eighteen shillings a week!" "Don't be too hard upon me, Mr. Pecksniff, in your own goodness," says the poor widow. "Oh, Calf, Calf!" cries the saint mournfully. "Oh, Baal, Baal! Oh, my friend Mrs. Todgers! To barter away the precious jewel, self-esteem, and cringe to any mortal creature for eighteen shillings a week!"

This canting hypocrite, who does the most heartless things "as a duty to society," and for his own sordid ends, and forgives wrongdoing in nobody but himself, is perhaps the best delineation of a plausible sham in the whole gallery.

Who is this surly, brutal, ill-favoured object, ill-formed of body, minus an eye, with cruelty and sordid greed writ large upon him, who now comes within our mental vision? This is the never-to-be-forgotten Squeers of Dotheboys Hall. "The blank side of his face," to quote from the book, "was much wrinkled and puckered up, which gave him a very sinister appearance, especially when he smiled, at which time his expression bordered closely on the villainous." His hair was very flat and shiny, with ends brushed stiffly up, assorting well with his harsh voice and coarse manner; he wore a white neckerchief with long ends, and a suit of scholastic black, with coat-sleeves a deal too long and trousers a great deal too short. We discover him at the "Saracen's Head,"

on Snow Hill, with a wretched little boy he is taking down to Yorkshire in a state of abject fear and misery. He is doing nothing that Squeers can beat him for, so he boxes his ears and tells him not to do it again; gives him more blows because he sneezes, and threatens to murder him if he cries; then on the entry of Nicholas, whom he pretends not to see, is found giving benevolent kindly advice to the poor child. As to the scenes at Dotheboys Hall, the description of Squeers's return to the school from London, the wretched condition of the unhappy boys and their cruel treatment, the absurd pretences of teaching them, the sordid brutality of the man all through (while taking all care for his own creature comforts), the treatment of Smike, and the final scene of his well-deserved chastisement by Nicholas—all these, admirably told with rare mingling of pathos and humour, you must all know too well for me to detail even in part. Revolting as it is, the picture was not overdrawn. Nay, so true to life was it, that as Dickens says in the Preface, more than one Yorkshire schoolmaster thought himself the original of Squeers, and one worthy threatened an action for libel, while another contemplated a journey to London, for the express purpose of committing an assault and battery on his traducer. But like other evils which the master laid bare with his magic pen, this one, since *Nicholas Nickleby* was written, has virtually been rooted out. Ignorance, imposture, and brutal cupidity, as typified in this coarse hypocrite Squeers, would be impossible in this day. On the whole this type of humbug is not only distinct, it is extinct. Compared with Pecksniff he is quite dissimilar. True, they both *take in* pupils in both senses, but Squeers wears little disguise. He is not smooth and oily, there is no subtlety about his methods; he wears no mask, indulges in no glib moralising, and assumes not the virtue of meekness and benign forgiveness. The Squeers type of humbug is dead, and if it existed would impose on no one; the Pecksniffian humbug is still very much alive in one way or another, and still imposes on many.

The theme grows as we study it, and turn from one familiar page to another. And yet it is far from exhausted. Other portraits in the gallery will merit attention, notably the 'umble Uriah and the pompous windbag Pumblechook, the plausible Tigg, the crafty Carker, the sanctimonious Littimer, the wily pretender Silas Wegg, and the conceited ignoramus Thomas Sapsea—the last of the series limned by the master's pen.

BOZ AND BATH*

THIS is an interesting little work, which deals exhaustively with Dickens's association with "the Queen of the West." There are few towns outside London which have so many Dickensian, and, of course, particularly Pickwickian associations as Bath. Dickens himself stayed there often. It was in Landor's House, in St. James's Square, that Little Nell was born; it was here that Mr. Pickwick "drank the waters" and played whist; and it was here that Mr. Winkle so innocently raised the wrath of Mr. Dowler. The only wonder is that the subject has not been dealt with in book form before. However, no one could have done it better than Mr. Fitzgerald, and his little book, which contains many excellent illustrations, should be heartily welcomed.

* *Boz and Bath: His Account of the Gay City, and of its Men, Women, and Places.* By Percy Fitzgerald, F.S.A. *Bath Chronicle* Offices, 1s. 6d.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

VI

IN MEMORY

THERE swept a sigh of sorrow universal
From melancholy Medway's mournful strand,
Upon the nightwind's desolate dispersal,
To float along the land.

The closing eve had had no shade of sorrow;
In silver haze we saw the planets swim;
But when the sun arose upon the morrow,
We felt the dawn was dim.

With grief-drown'd eyes we read—how briefly stated!—
That he was gone—the man of pure renown:
As if some bark, with our best treasures freighted,
Had in the dark gone down!

'Twas but a whisper, yet more widely sounding
Than the hoarse guns that for dead warriors roar,
A thrill electric circled all surrounding,
And spread from shore to shore.

And that sad circle stretching, still unbroken,
Around the world to utmost regions sped,
And tears were shed, where'er our tongue is spoken,
To know Charles Dickens—dead!

Within the Abbey let him take his slumber,
Make room, oh great ones of the Long Ago;
In your grand roll Charles Dickens thus to number,
Ye smile, blest shades, we know!

Not his the coronet, or ermine legal,
No herald-blazoned office in the state!
Without a title, to the Council Regal
But summoned when too late.

Here lay him down: the dust where he reposes
Is glorious dust of the illustrious dead:
And where he lies shall blossom God's rare roses
When sounds the summons dread!

Calm be his sleep—despite warm tears above him—
Who loved the weak, and never feared the strong,
Whose page was pure, who made all good hearts love him,
Who felt for others' wrong.

Yet though he sleeps lamented of a nation,
The good he did for us shall ne'er decay;
They live—the beings of his fine creation—
To make us glad for aye!

"FUN."

June 25th, 1870.

DICKENS'S POPULARITY
IS IT ON THE DECLINE?

By J. W. T. LEY

WE have been told several times lately that Dickens's popularity is on the wane. Mr. Arnold Bennett informed us last November that the handful of literary experts who ultimately make or unmake reputations had decided against Dickens, whilst a gentleman who signed himself "Scrogs" asserted in the *Brighton Herald* still more recently that "the handful of adoring admirers calling itself the Dickens Fellowship form, as it were, the only breakwater against the coming tide of opinion which threatens to make his reputation a mere memory in the oblivion of the things that have been." I dare say that Mr. Bennett and "Scrogs" will welcome as evidence in support of their contention the report of the Librarian of Newport, Monmouth, that "the star of Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, and others is undoubtedly waning." Yet this, I am bold enough to assert, is the only piece of evidence that they can produce. A writer in the *South Wales Echo* remarks that "what Newport reads is pretty much what all parts of England and Wales read from the free libraries," but this is merely an assumption, for which there can be but little, if any, justification, and rebutting evidence is at hand.

In compliance with a request from the editor of the *Bristol Evening Times*, the Librarian of Bristol has just compiled a list of the twenty-four most popular novels in the Bristol free libraries. In that list two of Dickens's books appear. The most popular novel in Bristol is *David Copperfield*, and next to that comes *A Tale of Two Cities*, whilst two of Scott's books occupy third and fourth places, and one of Thackeray's fifth. Lytton, however, is not represented. This may be fairly taken as an answer to the *South Wales Echo*, even if there were no corroborative evidence. But the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* has just taken a poll of its readers with a view to ascertaining the twelve most popular novelists in that town, and here again Dickens easily heads the list, whilst Scott is second, Thackeray fifth, and Lytton seventh. Further, *Household Words* has just taken a vote amongst its readers in order to ascertain the six most popular characters in Dickens's works. No fewer than one hundred and thirteen characters received votes, and these were representative of eighteen books, which is evidence, I think, that the readers of *Household Words* read their Dickens thoroughly. Thus it seems that Newport cannot, after all, be taken as fairly representative of the reading tastes of the people of the United Kingdom.

That Dickens is as popular in America as any other novelist, I do not think any of his detractors will be prepared to deny; but it may be questioned by some, perhaps, whether he is read extensively in some other parts of the world. And so it is interesting to note that one of the Melbourne newspapers has this year taken a poll of its readers, with the result that *David Copperfield* has been found to be the most popular novel, whilst *A Tale of Two Cities* appears tenth on the list,

and *Pickwick* eleventh. Here, again, *Vanity Fair* came second, and *Ivanhoe* third; but Lytton was not represented. All this is surely indicative that Dickens's popularity is not showing any very marked decline.

We are told continually that the public estimate of a writer or of a man must not be taken as final, and this to an extent is true; but it must be remembered that thirty-five years have passed since Dickens was laid to rest, and so it seems to me that if "the handful of literary experts who ultimately make or unmake reputations" really have decided against him, they have a formidable task in front of them.

THE ROOM IN WHICH DICKENS LAST WROTE
From a photograph by Edward Banes, taken, by request of the family, two days after Dickens died.

Finally, "Scrogs" writes of the Fellowship as a "handful of adoring admirers." Without quibbling as to his tautology, let me admit that the Fellowship is, after all, only a "handful" of Dickens's admirers. The fact is that a membership of near 8,000 is not absolute proof of the novelist's popularity. Indeed, a writer in the *Bristol Times and Mirror* is right when he says that a membership of this size is not representative of the popularity; but it is quite fair to point out that the Fellowship is not three years old, and that it has never advertised itself or touted for members. And in view of these facts, its size is, at any rate, good evidence, if not conclusive proof of Dickens's popularity.

CALENDAR OF DICKENS QUOTATIONS

COMPILED BY "OLD FLEET"

June 1.—"What joy and cheerfulness it wakes up within us, to see all nature beaming in brightness and sunshine."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

June 2.—"It isn't the waistcoat that I look at. It is the heart. The checks in the waistcoat are but the wires of the cage. But the heart is the bird. Ah! How many such birds are perpetually moulting and putting their beaks through the wires to peck at all mankind!"—*Old Curiosity Shop*—Mr. Sampson Brass.

June 3.—"Probably every new and eagerly expected garment ever put on since clothes came in fell a trifle short of the wearer's expectations."—*Great Expectations.*

June 4.—"There is sometimes an odd disposition in this country to dispute as improbable in fiction what are the commonest experiences in fact."—Postscript to *Our Mutual Friend* (first edition).

June 5.—"Whatsoever fashion is set in England is certain to descend."—*Uncommercial Traveller.*

June 6.—"If, as the poet informs us, England expects every man to do his duty, England is the most sanguine country on the face of the earth, and will find itself continually disappointed."—*Martin Chuzzlewit*—Mr. Pecksniff.

June 7.—"If we try to do our duty by those we employ . . . we know that we do right. Their doing wrong cannot change our doing right, and that should be enough for us."—*Letter to Mr. W. H. Wills.*

June 8.—"A sullen, obdurate disposition is of all tempers the worst."—*David Copperfield*—Mr. Murdstone.

June 9.—"I would rather that my children, living after me, trudged in the mud, and knew by the general feeling of society that their father was beloved, and had been of some use, than I would for them to ride in their carriages, and know by their banker's books that he was rich."—*Speech at Hartford, U.S.A.*

June 10.—"I have known a vast quantity of nonsense talked about bad men not looking you in the face. Don't trust that conventional idea. Dishonesty will stare honesty out of countenance any day in the week, if there is anything to be got by it."—*Hunted Down.*

June 11.—"A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other."—*A Tale of Two Cities.*

June 12.—"Confinement and anxiety will subdue the stoutest hearts."—*Old Curiosity Shop.*

June 13.—"To make one's sweetheart miserable is well enough and quite right, but to be made miserable one's self is a little too much!"—*Barnaby Rudge*—Dolly Varden.

June 14.—"When you are looking on a pair of the most delicious lips in the world, and see them gently break into a roguish smile—if you are very near them, and nobody else by—you cannot better testify your admiration of their beautiful form and colour than by kissing them at once."—*Pickwick Papers*—The Bagman.

June 15.—"Mrs. Joe had an exquisite art of making her cleanliness more uncomfortable and unacceptable than dirt itself. Cleanliness is next to godliness, and some people do the same by their religion."—*Great Expectations.*

June 16.—"It's a devil of a thing when relations fall out and disagree."—*Old Curiosity Shop*—Dick Swiveller.

June 17.—"To remember happiness which cannot be restored is pain, but of a softened kind. . . . In the most chequered life I firmly think there are so many little rays of sunshine to look back upon, that I do not believe any mortal (unless he had put himself without the pale of hope) would deliberately drain a goblet of the waters of Lethe, if he had it in his power."—*Nicholas Nickleby*—The Merry-faced Gentleman.

June 18.—"What the poor are to the poor is little known, excepting to themselves and God."—*Bleak House.*

June 19.—"Not an orphan in the wide world can be so deserted as the child who is an outcast from a living parent's love."—*Dombey and Son*—The Aunt.

June 20.—"A generous nature is not prone to strong aversions, and is slow to admit them even dispassionately, but when it finds ill-will gaining upon it, and can discern between-whiles that its origin is not dispassionate, such a nature becomes distressed."—*Little Dorrit.*

June 21.—"Love is very materially assisted by a warm and active imagination, which has a long memory, and will thrive for a considerable time on very slight and sparing food. Thus it is that it often attains its most luxurious growth in separation, and under circumstances of the utmost difficulty."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

June 22.—"To trust a man, as one of a body of men, is to place him under a wholesome restraint of social opinion, and is a very much better thing than to make a baby of him."—*Letter to Mr. Edmund Ollier.*

June 23.—"It is curious to trace the savage in the civilised man, and to detect the hold of some savage customs on conditions of society rather boastful of being high above them."—*Uncommercial Traveller.*

June 24.—"There ain't a magistrate goin' as don't commit himself twice as often as he commits other people."—*Pickwick Papers*—Sam Weller.

June 25.—"Every man, however obscure, however far removed from the general recognition, is one of a group of men impressible for good, and impressible for evil, and it is in the nature of things that he cannot really improve himself without in some degree improving other men."—*Speech at Birmingham.*

June 26.—"The word 'dear' among girls is frequently synonymous with 'wretch.'"—*Sketches by Boz.*

June 27.—"What I want, is frankness, confidence, less conventionality, and freer play of soul. We are all so dreadfully artificial."—*Dombey and Son*—Mrs. Skewton.

June 28.—"Dreams are the bright creatures of poem and legend, who sport on earth in the night season, and melt away again in the first beam of the sun, which lights grim care and stern reality on their daily pilgrimage through the world."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

June 29.—"The sun does not shine upon this fair earth to meet frowning eyes, depend upon it."—*Nicholas Nickleby*—The Merry-faced Gentleman.

June 30.—"Love, eternal and illimitable, not bounded by the confines of this world, or by the end of time, but reigns still, beyond the sea, beyond the sky, to the invisible country far away."—*Dombey and Son.*

A REMINISCENCE OF DICKENS

By JOHN COLEMAN

CHARLES DICKENS, then in the zenith of his fame, lived exactly opposite to us. He used to turn out pretty punctually between one and two, either with a pony and trap or on horseback; and as I generally timed my so-called lunch for the occasion, I was nearly always in evidence when he turned out. At that time he was a young, handsome fellow, and seemed to know it. There was an abounding vitality about him. His eyes were bright, his hair long and wavy, his whiskers luxuriant. His costume was peculiar and pronounced. It might have been my fancy, but the deserted street seemed to wake up into life and animation when he came forth. I used to stand open-mouthed, gazing with wonder and delight at this glorious and exuberant creature, reverently taking off my hat to him just as I should have uncovered to the Queen. Becoming quite accustomed to my unsophisticated homage, he invariably smiled and gave a nod of recognition as he went away.

Once Macready came out with him. When he caught sight of me, he whispered to Dickens. They both laughed as they drove off, little dreaming the pain their laughter left behind. This visit of Macready put a stop to my innocent pleasure, for I thought he recognised me. I couldn't keep away from my idol altogether, but I used to slink away whenever I saw Macready.—From *Fifty Years of an Actor's Life.*

DICKENS TO CHARITY'S AID

By B. W. MATZ.

THE name and fame of Dickens contributed substantially towards the success of the Grand Historical Bazaar in aid of the Westminster Hospital held on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of last month in Dean's Yard, Westminster. Mrs. Henry F. Dickens, the wife of the President of the Fellowship, and her daughters presided over a stall which had been built as an exact replica of "The Old Curiosity Shop," and was well stocked with old furniture, brasses, pewter, china, clocks, candlesticks, snuffers, armour—in fact a wonderful assortment of those things which went to the equipment of the famous abode of Little Nell and her grandfather. In addition there was a unique array of original editions of Dickens's works in parts, autograph letters, MSS., rare pamphlets, relics of Dickens, such as his pen, seal, spoons, etc., plays and play-bills, and many items too numerous to mention, besides a quantity of modern editions, in all of which a thriving trade was done for the benefit of the hospital.

Mrs. Dickens, dressed as the character of Miss Montflathers, Mrs. Hawksley (*née* Dickens) as the Marchioness, Miss Olive Dickens as Little Nell, Miss Elaine Dickens as Mrs. Jarley, added to the reality of the scene. It was by general consent the most attractive and interesting of all the stalls; indeed it wasn't a stall, it was a real shop. The reality of it all, and of Dickens's creations, was unconsciously voiced by a lady who stopped in front and exclaimed, "Well! we know what this is and who the personages are. There's Little Nell, there's the Marchioness," and so on; and seemed quite pleased to find among all the grand dresses of kings, courtiers, and notables of England's history, whom she apparently had been unable to identify, somebody she really knew. A feature of the third day was an exhibition of Dickens relics, and although upon a small scale, it was remarkably interesting. Miss Hogarth had lent the empty chair, made familiar through Luke Fildes's picture, and the MS. of *The Cricket on the Hearth;* Mr. Dickens, K.C., the desk on which many of the works were written; the copy of *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands* presented by Queen Victoria, containing the inscription: "To Charles Dickens, from Victoria Reg., March 9th, 1870"; the silver snuff-box presented by Mr. Giles to "The Inimitable Boz"; two frames containing the MS. of Dickens's own shorthand system as he taught it to Mr. H. F. Dickens in his youth; two MS. poems written for the amusement of his children, portraits, letters, etc. Mr. John F. Dexter sent some of Phiz's original drawings and sketches for *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* and some of Cruikshank's for *Oliver Twist* and *Sketches by Boz.* There was also a copy of the portrait of Dickens sitting writing at the very desk on exhibition, inscribed in his own hand to Edmund Yates, the Court suit Dickens wore when he visited the Queen, and many other interesting and valuable exhibits which probably never before were publicly shown, nor ever will be again.

Throughout the whole of the three days "The Old Curiosity Shop" was besieged by an enthusiastic and admiring crowd. And so the fame of Dickens can give aid to those good causes which he himself helped so often and wonderfully during his lifetime.

VISIT TO STAPLE INN

THE first of our summer rambles in Dickens-land was held on Saturday, May 13th, when a party of about one hundred visited Staple Inn, by kind invitation of Mr. T. Cato Worsfold. A meeting was held in the ancient hall of the Inn. Mr. James E. Palmer presided.

Mr. Worsfold gave an interesting lecture on the history of the famous Inn. Speaking of Dickens's associations with it, through *Edwin Drood*, he quoted the novelist's descriptions of the place from that book. He solved the mystery of "P. J. T." which so puzzled Dickens, explaining that these letters, which still are to be seen

MR. GREWGIOUS'S CHAMBERS

over what was Mr. Grewgious's chambers, stood for "Principal John Thompson," who presided over the Inn for two terms in 1747. Among the famous worthies of the Inn was mentioned the great Dr. Johnson, who moved there on March 23rd, 1759, from Gough Square, Fleet Street. It is said that the great lexicographer lived at No. 2, and it was during his residence here that he wrote *Rasselas*.

Mr. Worsfold presented each member of the party with two interesting souvenirs—one a picture of Grewgious's house, which, with his permission, we are able to reproduce, and the other a picture of an old way-bill announcing that a stage-coach started every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for York, from the Black Swan, Houlbourn, for York, performing the whole journey in four days, "if God permits." This is dated June, 1706.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

LONDON

IT has been decided to visit Portsmouth on Saturday, July 8th. The party will avail themselves of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company's excursion, the return fare for the day trip being 4*s.*, and for two days (to return on the Sunday), 5*s.* 6*d.* The train will leave London Bridge at 7.5 a.m., calling at New Cross at 7.10. The party should be a large one, for Portsmouth possesses deep interest to the Dickensian. "Boz" was born in the town, and his birthplace is now fitted up as a Dickens museum, and of course the associations of Vincent Crummles and Nicholas Nickleby with the town are well known. Arrangements will be detailed fully in *Household Words*.

NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD

THE Guild held a most successful social on Saturday, May 6th, at St. Bride's Institute, Fleet Street. There was a large attendance. A capital programme was contributed to by Miss Margaret Gyde, A.R.A.M. (pianoforte solo), Miss Tyrrell, Mr. James E. Palmer, and Mr. T. Le Ryt (songs), and Mr. Philip Astere (recital). A most interesting feature of the evening was a drill by two children, who have been treated for paralysis by "The Tiny Tim" section of the Guild. Florrie Harrison, a pretty little girl, performed a hoop drill with an ease which made it difficult to realise that two years ago she was given up by the doctors as hopelessly paralysed in both legs. Master Willie Parker went through a dumb-bell drill with remarkable agility—all the more remarkable from the fact that until three months ago he had never put his heels to the ground. These two cases speak volumes for the usefulness of the work done by the Guild.

The greater part of the evening was given up to dancing, which was indulged in until very close upon midnight with much enjoyment and appreciation.

Much kind and substantial help has been received during the month. Mr. F. Sydenham Clarke (one of the oldest members of the Fellowship) has been a true friend. He has supplied all we asked for in a previous issue. A melodeon has gone to our bedridden protégé; two boxes full of "brewer" caps, a handsome "crawling rug," and a splendid rocking-horse have been received for the "Tiny Tim" section; while a generous gift for the immediate relief of a case of terrible privation has also come from this kind friend. Now, almost as we write, comes a letter from Dr. Colles, M.D., F.R.C.S.I., saying he will at all times be glad to render such assistance as lies in his power. For all these kindnesses we offer our sincere thanks and feel that May has been a red-letter month for the Guild.

BRIXTON BRANCH

THE annual conversazione of above was held on Friday, May 12th. The chair was occupied by the President of the branch, Mr. P. A. Jones, and among the many visitors present was Mr. J. W. T. Ley, Hon. General Secretary of the parent Society. An enjoyable programme was provided. Piano solos and songs effectively rendered by Miss Bones, Dickensian recitals (given in splendid style) by Mr. William Miles ("Mr. Winkle's Misadventures at Bath" and "Mr. Bumble's Courtship"), followed by Mr. Howard Rose ("Richard Doubledick" and "The Marchioness"), Mr. Douglas ("Old Cheeseman"), and Mr. J. S. Baines ("Boots at the Holly Tree Inn"). During the evening the Chairman reported the results of the working season of the Little Dorrit Society. These were altogether satisfactory. A liberal donation had been allotted to the Herne Bay Convalescent Home, and several tons of coal distributed to the poor of the locality during the winter.

TORONTO (CANADA) BRANCH

A BRANCH of the Society was organised at the Central Y.M.C.A., Toronto, Canada, on the 9th of May, under the most favourable auspices, and with an initial membership likely to exceed one hundred. Mr. Williamson briefly explained the rules and objects of the Fellowship, and a resolution was at once passed in favour of establishing a local branch, all present expressing their intention of becoming members. It was decided to make the minimum subscription 25 cents, from date of organisation until October next, and thereafter 50 cents per annum. The following officers were elected, to hold office until October, 1906:—Hon. President, Prof. Goldwin Smith; President, Mr. E. S. Williamson; Vice-Presidents, Mr. J. W. Bengough, Mr. James L. Hughes, Mr. W. Houston; Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Miss M. Pennell; Council, Mrs. R. A. Donald, Miss Windeat, Mr. J. J. Follett, Mr. J. B. Harris, Mr. G. L. McCrea, Mr. J. Macdonald Oxley, Mr. Frank Yeigh.

The branch is particularly strong in the *personnel* of its officers. The Hon. President, Prof. Goldwin Smith, himself in the first rank of English writers, is at the same time a genuine lover of Dickens.

Mr. E. S. Williamson, the President, has for more than fifteen years made a specialty of gathering Dickensiana, and is the possessor of a comprehensive collection. On the platform Mr. Williamson has achieved more than a local reputation with his illustrated Dickens lectures.

Of the Vice-Presidents, Mr. J. W. Bengough is a caricaturist, lecturer, and poet. Mr. Hughes is the Chief Inspector of Toronto Public Schools, and one of the foremost educationists of America. Among the numerous books written by Mr. Hughes may be specially mentioned *Dickens as an Educator*. Mr. W. Houston, M.A., is a prominent educationist, editorial writer, and lecturer on historical subjects in connection with the University Extension movement.

Among the members of the Council, Mr. J. Macdonald Oxley is probably the most prolific and versatile writer in Canada, and has made the production of books for the younger generation a field peculiarly his own; while Mr. Frank Yeigh is well known at home and abroad for his special journalistic work, and his success as a lecturer on travel subjects.

MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA) BRANCH

AN excellent programme was presented at the monthly meeting held in April. Mr. Fred Scrivenor, a life-long student and admirer of the master, contributed a capital paper on "Sam Weller, a Life Study," which showed great insight and wide research. Readings were given by Mrs. Blackburn, "The Kenwigs Family," and Miss Haig, "Our Curate"; and Mr. B. E. Doyle recited in first-class style the meeting of Nicholas Nickleby and John Browdie at the "Saracen's Head." Interest in the meetings is being maintained, and the membership is being constantly augmented. The number on the roll now is 340.

FOREST GATE AND DISTRICT BRANCH

THE committee of this branch has arranged for an excursion to Dickensland on Thursday, June 22nd. The party will leave Forest Gate at 11.5 a.m. (Liverpool Street 10.45 for Chigwell.) Members will pay their own railway fares, and tickets for luncheon and tea will cost 4*s*. each. Arrangements are being made for a drive through the forest. All Dickensians will be heartily welcomed.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

THIS branch held its annual meeting on May 10th, when a most satisfactory report was presented. It was gratifying to know that the session ends with a balance in hand of £1 10*s*. The council and officers were elected, and there is every promise of a successful future for the branch.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

THE concluding meeting of the above branch took the form of a conversazione, and was held at the Lecture Hall, Steine House, on May 17th. The committee's invitation to members to bring friends was well responded to, and as a consequence the hall was crowded. An excellent programme was provided, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening was spent. Mr. W. Adams was Chairman. There were songs and solos, recitations and readings, with light refreshments provided in the intervals.

Mr. Henry Davey read a brief paper on "Dickens and Brighton," but only so far as *Dombey and Son* was concerned. Mr. W. F. Fowler recited from the *Christmas Carol;* Mr. W. W. Bartlett, "Dickens in Camp"; Miss Alice Halsey, "Bumble's Courtship"; the Rev. George Plumb read "Dr. Marigold"; and Mr. F. J. Gauntlett gave a very realistic and dramatic recital of "Copperfield's First Dissipation." The Brighton branch has made great headway this season, and with the array of elocutionary talent at its disposal should never be at a loss for an entertaining evening. But it is felt that an attempt should be made next season to provide more lectures and discussions, and members are appealed to for short papers on their favourite character or book in order to stimulate debates. Mr. Covell, the Hon. Secretary, and the committee are to be congratulated on the work they have done during the past season.

EDINBURGH BRANCH

THE closing meeting for the season of the Edinburgh branch took place May 6th, in the Goold Hall, 5, St. Andrew Square, the Rev. James Stevenson, Leith, presiding over a large gathering. The proceedings took the form of a conversazione, and the musical programme, which had been arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Waddell, was contributed to by Miss Bell, Mr. Andrew Brown, and Master Philip Levine, the latter of whom played selections on the violin. Miss Madge Craigie and Mr. J. Finlayson Gould gave readings, and performed the dramatic sketch, "A Pair of Lunatics." Altogether the programme was one of exceptional interest. During the evening remarks were made by the Chairman, Miss Hutchison Sterling, Dr. Parrott, and Mr. A. Eddington.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

THE season of the Sheffield branch was brought to a close on April 28th with a very successful smoking concert, held at the Victoria Station Hotel. Between 350 and 400 members and friends were present. The President (Councillor John Derry) was in the chair, and the Hon. Secretary (Mr. Padmore) in the vice-chair. An excellent programme had been arranged. To accompaniments played by Mr. Dodworth songs were sung by Mrs. Shirley, Mrs. T. H. Warskett, Misses Smith, A. Hobson, and Raynor; Messrs. D. Scoltock, C. W. Jones, T. Barnsley, Dodworth, T. A. Pickering, E. Hancock, E. B. Pearson, W. Shirley, E. Darwin, W. J. Russell, J. P. Gillot, W. H. Ibbotson, and E. Callum. Mr. T. Barnsley's sketches were humorous in the extreme. His whimsicalities and mirth-provoking representations of various characters were features of the evening. Mr. Dodworth was an efficient and painstaking accompanist, and in addition contributed pianoforte selections. Miss G. Allott gave a sketch, and Mr. H. Kent Marples, who was one of the first favourites of the Sheffield branch, gave representations of characters from Dickens in a masterly fashion. He also contributed two recitations.

It is expected that in the summer, probably in June, an excursion to Dickens-land will be arranged.

WINNIPEG BRANCH

ON the 11th of April we had arranged a private recital of the piece "Bardell *v.* Pickwick." Dr. Woollard as Serjeant Buzfuz, Mr. J. Bagshawe as the Judge, Mr. Overett as Sam Weller, Mrs. King as Mrs. Cluppins, and Mrs. Leighton as Mrs. Sanders, sustained the characters represented admirably.

On the 1st of May we held our last regular meeting of the winter session, this taking the form of a conversazione to members and their friends. An excellent programme was provided, amongst which a recitation by Mrs. King, song by Mr. Bagshawe, sketches by Dr. Munro, and recitations by Mr. Porteus, deserve special mention. The Pickwick Club gave a dramatic sketch, entitled "The Wooing of Miss Arabella Allen by Mr. Nathaniel Winkle," which was very well received, roars of laughter being evoked by the amusing scenes. The costumes were very good, and gave an excellent representation of characters in the time of Dickens. The cast was as follows:—Mr. Pickwick, Mr. J. F. Gascoigne; Mr. Winkle, Mr. Overett; Sam Weller, Mr. Weir; Arabella, Mr. W. Stapleton. The Pickwick Club was formed this winter, and is composed of four members of the Fellowship, who meet regularly to discuss, read, recite, and generally follow out *Pickwick Papers* (in a Pickwickian sense). Refreshments were served during the interval. Music was provided by the Excelsior Orchestra, who gave some very good selections during the evening.

WEST LONDON SUBURBAN BRANCH

THE last meeting of the session was held on Thursday in last week, at St. Stephen's Church House, Shepherd's Bush, and took the form of a conversazione. A number of visitors from the parent Fellowship were present, including Mr. J. E. Palmer (Chairman of the Council), Mr. J. W. T. Ley (Secretary), Mr. S. Marriott (Treasurer), Miss Miniken, Messrs. T. W. Tyrrell, J. W. Lickis, and others. The Rev. H. Lethbridge Davis occupied the chair, and addressed the meeting on the objects of the Fellowship. Messrs. Palmer, Ley, and Marriott also spoke during the evening, the speeches being interspersed with musical items by the following ladies and gentlemen: Misses Higginson and Gadd, Messrs. Leonard Price and Soutter, songs; Mrs. Metcalfe, pianoforte solo; the Misses Mitchell, pianoforte duet; Mr. T. W. Tyrrell, humorous songs. An interesting paper by Miss Miniken, on the work of the Fellowship Needlework Guild, was read by Mr. C. H. Sanctuary. Refreshments were served during the evening, this department being in the able hands of Mrs. Vidler. The usual votes of thanks brought an enjoyable evening and also a successful session to a close.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

THE last meeting of the winter season took place on May 1st, at the Albert Hall, when the programme, arranged by Miss Katie Blackmore, was quite up to the usual standard of musical excellence set by the other five concerts. A ladies' mandolin band, under the conductorship of Miss Carrie Hughes, appeared in Italian festal costumes, with wreaths of red geraniums, and gave brilliant selections from *The Bohemian Girl*, *Faust*, and *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Much merriment was caused by the scenes from Dickens, the make-up and acting being very clever The quarrel scene between Sairey Gamp (Miss Emily Jones) and Betsey Prig (Miss J. Goodman) was smartly played, and the tea-party, at which Nicholas Nickleby excites the jealousy of John Browdie, was very diverting, the performers being Misses E. Jones, M. Deal, V. Slade, and L. Job. The minuet from *The Battle of Life*, by the Misses E. and W. Kimber, E. German, K. Blackmore, M. Deal, L. Mills, M. Penney, and F. Humphries, had to be repeated, the graceful figures of the dance harmonising well with the Georgian costumes. Songs were given by Miss K. Jackson, and instrumental selections by Miss L. Welch and Miss K. Blackmore.

MANHATTAN (NEW YORK, U.S.A.) BRANCH

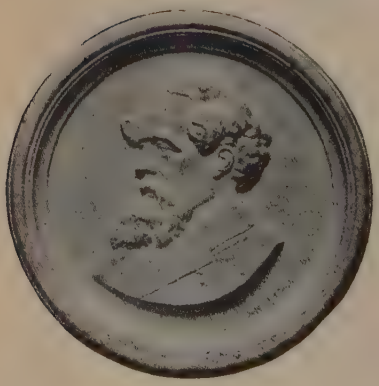
EXCELLENT reports reach us of this branch. Mr. Charles H. Govan writes: "Our organisation was perfected last evening (May 4th). We already have seventy-five paid members, and have arranged to hold our first dinner on the 18th inst. at the Hotel Empire. Our roll of officers is as follows: President, Mr. Charles Ross Keen; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Charles H. Govan, Mr. S. C. Coale, and Mr. Charles Frederick Adams; Secretary, Mrs. Mary E. Craigie; Treasurer, Mr. Alexander Elks Squire; auditors, Dr. L. G. Wilder and Edwin L. Edgerly; Financial Secretary, Mr. G. C. Coale; Press Committee, Mr. Philip Zalkind, Mr. John Jerome Rooney, and Mr. Charles Frederick Adams."

DICKENS DRAMATISED*

THERE seems to be no end to dramatic versions of Dickens's books; they have been appearing regularly for more than sixty years. It is not surprising, of course, for the books seem to lend themselves most obviously to dramatisation. The apparently surprising fact is that these Dickens plays have practically never been successful, though this, again, is not surprising to those who have seen or read the majority of them, for the reason is that in too many cases the adapters have not given us Dickens. The novelist's characters have been there, but not Dickens. Miss Pagan, however, in every one of her adaptations has avoided this fault, and the result is that they are all admirable. In *Mr. Pecksniff's Pupil* we have an excellent little comedy, which is, as far as is possible, true to the book itself. The thread of the story is kept intact, and wherever possible the actual words which the novelist himself has placed in the mouths of the characters are used. It is, on the whole, a capital little play.

* *Mr. Pecksniff's Pupil.* A Comedy in Five Acts. Adapted by I. M. Pagan from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, by Charles Dickens. London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1*s.* net.

MEDALLION PORTRAIT OF DICKENS



A LIFE-LIKE medallion portrait in plaster of Dickens has just been manufactured by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. It is cast from a modelling after the familiar portrait by Watkins, and is an excellent piece of workmanship.

We are able to give a reproduction of the cast, which measures eleven inches in diameter, and costs 2*s.* 6*d.* Packing and postage 9*d.* extra.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH.

BOOKS

The Pickwick Papers, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby* in Macmillan's Illustrated Pocket Edition on India paper. Small crown 8vo. In limp cloth, 2*s.* net each; in limp leather, 3*s.* net each. London: Macmillan and Co.

The "Boz" Club Papers, 1905. Verbatim report of Boz Club dinner, Feb. 7th, 1905. Privately printed.

ARTICLES, ETC., IN NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Tales from Dickens, by Hallie Erminie Rives. "David Copperfield." Illustrated. Chicago: *The Inner Ocean*, March 12th.

"Bargains in Books: A Play of Dickens." *T.P.'s Weekly*, May 5th.

"Dickens and the 'Maypole.'" *Loughton Advertiser*, April 29th and May 6th.

"Written in a Library: Dickens in America, etc." *Bristol Evening Times*, May 10th.

Bibliographical Notes on Dickens and Thackeray. *Notes and Queries*, May 13th.

"Les Héros de Dickens," by Arthur Dourliac. Paris: *Revue Idéaliste*, May 15th.

The "Brothers Cheeryble." *Manchester Guardian*, May 17th.

Famous Books you should Read, and Why. V. "A Tale of Two Cities." Illustrated. *Pictorial Magazine*, May 20th.

Dickens's "Degradation." Letter in *T. P.'s Weekly*, May 26th.

The Six Most Popular Characters in Dickens. Result of competition, with notes and comments by J. W. T. Ley. *Household Words*, May 27th.

PICTORIAL POST CARDS

Bust of Dickens surrounded by decorative frame. Price 2*d.*

"The Empty Chair, Gadshill." Photograph of Luke Fildes's picture. Price 2*d.*

The Birthplace of Dickens. Photograph taken 7th February, 1905. Price 2*d.*

Bust of Dickens. Price 2*d.*

The above four cards are published by the Curator, Dickens Museum, Portsmouth.

Dickens Characters: Reproduction of S. Eytinge's picture entitled "Mr. Pickwick's Review." London: F. G. O. Stuart. 1*d.*

Studies from life by Charles Dickens. A series of 34 coloured characters by Kyd. Portsmouth: J. Welch and Sons. 1*d.* each.

Notable Portraits. Set II., containing Lehmann's portrait of Dickens. The Knight Series. London: Knight Bros.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

June 3. Visit to Dickensian places in Hampstead and district.

,, 7. Durban Pickwick Club: Papers—"Wilkins Micawber," by Mr. S. Churchyard; and "Tony Weller," by Mr. L. Sweling.

,, 21. Durban Pickwick Club: Lecture, "Agnes Wickfield and Sydney Carton," by Mr. W. Osborn, J.P.

,, 22. Visit to Chigwell, arranged by the Forest Gate branch. Particulars of Hon. Sec.

,, 28. Needlework and Charitable Guild: Meeting at St. Bride's Institute at 7 o'clock.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN ANCESTOR OF DICKENS

To the Editor of "The Dickensian"

DEAR SIR,—Whilst looking up the *Calendar of State Papers* in the Record Office for references to imprisonment of deserters from the navy in the Marshalsea Prison during the seventeenth century, I happened upon the following, which may be of interest to Dickensians (the time is after the taking of Oxford by the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War):

"John Dickens London, 5 Dec. 1646. Begs to compound on Oxford articles for delinquency. Left his dwelling and went to Oxford.

"(From) Sir Thomas Fairfax Knight Generall of the Forces raised by the Parliament.

"Suffer the bearer hereof Mr. John Dickens who was in the city and garrison of Oxford at the surrender thereof, and is to have the full benefit of the articles agreed unto, quietly and without let or interruption, to pass your guards with his Servants, Horses, Armes, Goods and all other necessaries and to repaire unto London or elsewhere upon his necessary occasions. And in all places where he shall reside or whereto he shall remove to be protected from any violence to his Person Goods or Estate according to the said articles and to have full liberty at any time within six months to goe to any convenient Port and to Transport Himselfe with his Servants Goods and Necessaries beyond the Seas. And in all other things to enjoy the benefit of the said articles. Hereunto due obedience is to be given by all Persons whom it may concerne as they will answer the contrary.

"Given under my hand this 24th day of June 1646.

"To all Officers and Souldiers under my command and all others whom it may concern. (Signed) FAIRFAX."

It is very possible that this order refers to an ancestor of Mr. John Dickens, the author's father. Can any student furnish any information? Anyway, it seemed a curious coincidence that I should light upon it whilst searching for old-time details of the Marshalsea. W. SOWRAY.

SALIS HOUSE, LOWTHER HILL, FOREST HILL, S.E.

PROPOSED ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SECRETARIES

To the Editor of "The Dickensian"

DEAR SIR,—I was rather surprised that there was no letter in the last issue of the *Dickensian* relative to Mr. T. Padmore's suggestion for a conference of secretaries. I had hoped that that letter would meet with some expressions of approval from other branch secretaries. Personally I should like very much to see such a conference arranged, and I write as a past branch secretary. There would be no difficulty in arranging an agenda, the only difficulty that would be likely to arise being the question of a suitable centre. Birmingham would be the most suitable from the geographical point of view, and I have no doubt that the members of the Birmingham branch would be pleased to welcome the delegates; but I am inclined to think that London would be the most suitable. Excursions are run regularly from all parts of the country to London during the summer months, and, seeing that the question of expense would be an important one, this fact is worthy of consideration. And of course the conference might then take place at headquarters, which would mean an avoidance of the expense of hiring a room.

I shall be glad to hear from branch secretaries in regard to the proposal. I may say that Mr. Arthur Humphreys, Hon. Sec. of the Manchester branch, and Mr. S. Hinton Edwards, Hon. Sec. of the Nottingham branch, favour it. Yours very faithfully,

J. W. T. LEY, *Hon. Gen. Sec.*

CHARLES DICKENS IN 1844

From an engraving by W. J. Linton, after a portrait by Margaret Gillies